THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir. The Russian authorities are considering a pipeline from the Eastern Siberian oilfields to the Pacific coast. We have expressed our interest in associating ourselves with the project. The initial reaction has been positive.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Coal bed methane projects of ONGC

1256. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC has proposed to take up coal bed methane projects across the country;

(b) whether ONGC has invited bids for development and commercial exploitation of coal bed methane blocks and if so, the location of blocks identified therefor; and

(c) whether the ONGC is also lending its expertise on coal bed methane production to Zimbabwe and if so, whether ONGC will invest in Zimbabwe CBM projects?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) either single or in consortium with other PSUs, have signed contracts with the Government for exploration and production of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) in 9 blocks situated in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat;

(b) No, Sir. Till date, no bid has been invited by ONGC. However, an expression of interest has been invited by ONGC for integrated turnkey contracts for exploration, production and development of its CBM blocks.

(c) No, Sir. At present, ONGC is not lending its expertise in CBM production to Zimbabwe , but a delegation from Zimbabwe visited India recently to broach the subject of cooperation in this sector.

Objectives of ONGC

1257. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the core activity of ONGC;

(b) whether ONGC is sticking to its core activity and objectives;

(c) to what extent ONGC is concentrating on oil exploration;

(d) the new fields discovered by ONGC in the last three years which have commercial importance or viability; and

(e) the steps proposed to direct ONGC to confine to its core activity?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The core activity of ONGC is exploration and production of oil and gas within and outside the country for energy security of the country with the mission and objective to be a world class Oil and Gas Company.

(b) Yes, Sir. In tune with the strategy pursued by most global oil majors, ONGC is also from time to time evaluating and pursuing business growth options by way of value chain integration and synergy amongst all operational units. The focus and core activity of ONGC would, however,continue to be in finding new resources of oil and gas in the country and in acquiring equity oil abroad.

(c) With respect to the target of ONGC's X-plan exploration programme which envisages acquisition of 35,286 line kilometer of two dimensional, 34,834 sq. km. of three dimensional seismic data and drilling of 561 exploratory wells in onshore, shallow offshore and deepwater areas of ONGC operated acreage, as on 1.10.2004, ONGC has already acquired 42,645 line kilometer of two dimensional seismic data, 36,825 sq. km. of three dimensional seismic data and drilled 332 exploratory wells.

In the first two years of X-plan, as on 1.04.2004, ONGC has established in place volume of 232.88 MMt Oil and Oil Equivalent Gas (O+OEG) both from new finds, new pools and extension areas against the target of 225.54 MMt O+OEG aggregating 5988.64 MMt since inception.

In NELP rounds, ONGC has continued to bid aggressively and has successively enhanced its acreages.Out of the 124 exploration blocks offered under four rounds of NELP bidding for oil and gas exploration, ONGC, either on sole risk basis or in consortium with other companies, was awarded a total of 47 blocks as operator. In addition, ONGC has participating interest in four NELP blocks in which OIL is the operator.

With the success in NELP rounds, ONGC acreage holding has also increased covering an area of 5,65,615 sq. km. of exploration acreage and 10,968 sq. km. of mining leases.

(d) ONGC have informed the Ministry that the Corporation has made nineteen finds, eight oil and eleven gas finds, during last three years (2001-04), out of which seventeen finds are estimated for commercial hydrocarbons and only two gas finds are under further evaluation prior to assessment. Of these nineteen finds, six on land finds are on production/ trial production, two offshore finds are planned for development and remaining finds are under various stages of delineation.

(e) Government have been reviewing and monitoring the performance of all organisations under its control, including ONGC . The process of such review and monitoring is a continuous one, and *inter-alia,* deals with ONGC concentrating on, but not necessarily confining itself, to its core areas of competence.

MoU between ONGC and Gujarat Government

1258. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) has entered into a MoU with the Government of Gujarat to establish a large power plant at Dahej in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government/ONGC in this regard;

(c) the likely date of commissioning of the power plant; and

(d) what portion of the power would be used for captive consumption and what portion would be available for other users in the area?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKARAIYAR): (a) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has signed a MoU with the Government of Gujarat to facilitate development of the required infrastructure for ONGC's value addition projects in the Special Economic Zone at Dahej. The projects are at a conceptual stage.